

**PATENT APPLICATION**

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re the Application of:

HARA et al.

Group Art Unit: Unknown

Application No.: New U.S. Patent Application

Examiner: Unknown

Filed: January 22, 2002

Attorney Dkt. No.: 108426-00013

For: SYSTEM FOR DETERMINING OVERALL CAPABILITY OF A TRADING  
PARTNER

**PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT**

Commissioner for Patents  
Washington, D.C. 20231

January 22, 2002

Sir:

Prior to initial examination of the application, please amend the above-identified  
application as follows:

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

Please amend claims 12, 14, 15,16 and 17 as follows:

12. (Amended) A method for comprehensively determining a trading partner by a system comprising a database storing data representing capabilities of trading partners, in numerical form and a controller, the method comprising the following steps performed by the controller: receiving bidding prices from the trading partners; reading data on the trading partners, in numerical form, from the trading partner database; and selecting a trading partner or trading partners for the matter based on the received bidding prices and the read data represented in numerical form.

14. (Amended) A method for comprehensively determining a trading partner, according to claim 12, further comprising the following steps performed by the controller: weighing the data representing capabilities of trading partners, in numerical form, according to an article subjected to the bidding; and selecting a trading partner or trading partners for the matter, based on the bidding prices and the weighted data represented in numerical form.

15. (Amended) A method for comprehensively determining a trading partner, according to claim 14, further comprising the following steps performed by the controller: representing a difference between the bidding price and a target price predetermined for the matter, in numerical form; adding the price difference and selecting trading partners in order of decreasing value of the data represented in numerical form, after the addition.

16. (Amended) A method for comprehensively determining a trading partner, according to claim 14, further comprising the following steps performed by the controller: representing a difference between the bidding price and a target price predetermined for the matter, in numerical form; multiplying the weighted data represented in numerical form by the price difference represented in numerical form; and selecting trading partners in order of decreasing value of the data represented in numerical form, after the multiplication.

17. (Amended) A method for comprehensively determining a trading partner, according to claim 12, further comprising the following steps performed by the controller:

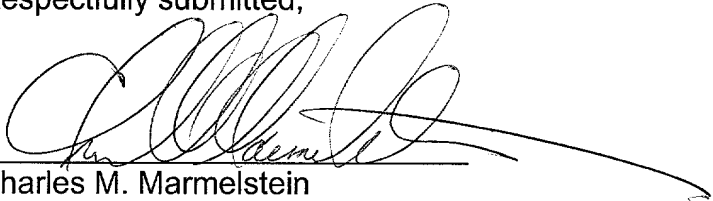
choosing a selecting routine from a plurality of predetermined selecting routines; and selecting a trading partner or trading partners for the matter by executing the chosen selecting routine.

#### REMARKS

Claims 1-17 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 12, 14, 15, 16 and 17 are amended. No new matter is contained in the amendments.

Please charge any fee deficiency or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 01-2300.

Respectfully submitted,



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